

Artist and Author Carolyn Brenan Harvey Explores a Personal History

By Kimberley Keyes

Native American history has always fascinated artist Carolyn Brenan Harvey. Descended from sea captain Abner Dunton, the adoptive father of an Indian boy, the young Harvey was urged by her mother not to reveal her Native American heritage.

Now a 68-year-old, moccasin-wearing grandmother, Harvey hides her affinity for Native American culture — and her growing disdain for the white settlers' ways — from no one.

American Indians "were probably as equally civilized as the Pilgrims, only in a different way," she said recently.

Her feelings, and the area's natural history, inspired her to write and illustrate "The Great Marsh," a children's book about a fictitious Wampanoag family living near Duxbury Bay in the late 1600s.

Published last year with the help of her friend Art Turner's computer, "The Great Marsh" tells the story of Sanay, a little girl who must navigate the river on a raft to bring her grandmother and little brother home safely.

The three are guided by an old black crow called *Kaw Kaw*. Harvey said she later learned many tribes worshiped the crow as one of its gods. They called it *Cautantawit*, she said.

"I just couldn't believe it," said Harvey, who will read her book aloud Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Ellison Center for the Arts. Sponsored by the Duxbury Art

Association, where she teaches art to children and has long been a member, the event for ages 5 and up includes a signed copy of the book, a hands-on art project and refreshments. An art exhibit and sale, featuring work by Harvey and Winslow descendant Mabel Colburn, will take place at the center in conjunction with the reading.

One scene in "The Great Marsh" was inspired by a real-life tale Harvey heard from her artist husband, Bob. A friend of his found the

The Great Marsh



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remains of an Indian buried in the marsh bank while canoeing in the 1920s, she said.

Another touch of reality is the book's description of the Josiah Winslows, a real-life English family that lived near present-day Careswell Street in Marshfield more than 300 years ago.

The great marsh, which can be seen from Careswell Street, separates Marshfield and Duxbury. The Harveys built their dream house at the end of Duck Hill Road in Duxbury, overlooking the marsh, in the early 1960s.

Owners of a business that designed and built houses, the Harveys lived in Duxbury for four years before financial troubles forced them to sell their house.

Today the two artists, who have been married for 46 years, live on Moraine Street in Marshfield. Their house was built in 1760 by a Captain Sprague, Harvey said.

Retired as the bookkeeper for her husband's business, Harvey teaches at the Duxbury Art Association building on Lincoln Street. Last week she juggled teaching her class with preparing for the 20th annual Festival of the Arts in Marshfield Hills. She is chairman of art edu-



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Staff Photos by Chris Bernstein

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cation for the North River Arts Society, which sponsored the festival.

Last Thursday, Harvey oversaw 11 young art students coloring pictures of sports figures or family members with fat wax crayons. In between coaxing them to work faster — "Get going, Jacob!" — she blurted out snippets about herself.

"When I was 6 years old, I painted the neighbor's kitchen floor with Crisco and jelly, mixed together," she informed the children.

"Eeeeuwww," they responded.



A photographer there to take her photo suggested capturing her with a coffee cup and cigarette.

"Damn right," Harvey said. But she was too busy to drink or smoke just then.

In her spare time, Harvey researches her next book, based on the 1675 battle between English settlers and Native Americans known as King Philip's War.

Her study of the area history has taught her, she said, "how much I don't know.... How much more I need to learn."

Author and artist Carolyn Brenan Harvey will read her book, "The Great Marsh," Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Ellison Center for the Arts at the Lower Alden School. Admission price is \$10 per child and includes the reading, a signed copy of the book, a mural project and refreshments. Recommended age is 5 and up. Sponsored by the Duxbury Art Association, the event includes an art exhibit and sale for adults, featuring work by Harvey and Winslow descendant Mabel Colburn. Coffee will be served; admission to the exhibit is free. Information: 837-8337.